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Take 2 of 2--philippines: Ileta's insurgency policy praised

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[Text] The AFP was aghast. "March, until the death of the last NPA? That's like the Bataan Death March, for the AFP. Live off knapsacks? Kill? Kill/armed/[preceding word within slantlines published in italics] guerrillas? This man needs a rest. Is he crazy? He is reliving the '50s, the myth of the Rangers. Man, this is the 20th Century. Be realistic. We're just doing a job. Is this guy trying to get us killed? What does he think we are, soldiers?"

And the AFP raked up the old issue of Human Rights concerns hamstringing the AFP effort against the Communists. "How can it be expected to defeat the Communists," the AFP smart-asses argued, "if all these bleeding hearts make such a fuss about killing unarmed civilians. You can't tell a rebel from a civilian until the lying target fires at you. That's too late!" But what Rocky wanted the AFP to concentrate on was getting the AFP fit to tangle with the "armed" Communists rather than the unarmed, and unidentifiable civilian supporters. He wanted the ratio of patrols to contacts markedly improved. And he wanted the ratio of contacts to kills shooting through the ceiling. This was essentially his message. For he had winced in pain when one officer had proudly reported to President Aquino that his command had engaged in 150 patrols in the past quarter. And when Cory had asked, "and how many encounters did you have?" looked sheepishly at Ileta and said, "None, Ma'am."

The AFP would veil after an ambush when a flood of soldiers

would be "hamburgered" by raking fire or thrown in the air by an exploding mine. Ito's eyes would only narrow, his lips would tighten with a slight contemptuous curl in the corner. What were they doing riding in that jeep? In that kind of country? Why hadn't they fanned out on foot?

But Rocky rarely spoke up. Sylvester Stallone with the breeding, the daring--hell, the class background--and the code of honor of the confederate Jeb Stuart. More punch than talk, if they would only let him. He thought the AFP had an ingrained conception of the ideal soldier, and that it was not necessary to discuss it in public for that would only show up the inadequacy of the present military. That would be like a knife in the chest for Rocky, for whom the army is home and life.

He was, as he suspected, clearly irrelevant. He had to go. And so he went. With more sadness than bitterness as he watched the model of the soldier he himself had drawn with his own career disappear in the horizon.

An old soldier mourning the passing of the ancient and unchangeable calling of soldiering. For, no matter the advances and conveniences of modern technology, the only way to kill is with the hand and with the heart and out in the open where you can be killed as well.

You think. What if Achilles had gotten old, all the arrows having failed to find his heel?

Rocky in his tent, leaning on his shield, looking out to sea--at an Iron Age gone by.

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